

# Involving the Business Community in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

## Why involve the business community?

Businesses can make a real difference in teen pregnancy prevention. Executives tend to be well-positioned in the community to take a leadership role. They can provide a variety of resources. Community leaders who have worked with businesses know from experience that it takes hard work, persistence, creativity, and insight into how business leaders think to draw them in as participants in teen pregnancy prevention efforts, but the payback can be well worth it. Programs will benefit from the business's contribution, which comes in many forms, the community will benefit from the enhanced activities, and the business may enjoy favorable publicity and satisfaction from participating in an important cause.

Businesses have a vested interest in working to prevent teen pregnancy because it has financial, social, and workforce-related consequences, all of which affect the for-profit world. However, business leaders may not be aware of the effect teen pregnancy has on their companies, and, therefore, education and explanation are often the first step to getting them involved.

“It is important to use statistics and the media to show the impact of the problem and its implications for society clearly. Once they see, some businesses will want to get involved,” explains Skip Oppenheimer, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Oppenheimer Companies, Inc., and Chairman of the Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention in Idaho. In addition to providing basic teen pregnancy statistics (the number of annual teen births in the community, for instance), programs can also use the following points to help make the case to business:

- *Lost productivity and economic growth.* A Robin Hood Foundation study estimated the annual cost to U.S. taxpayers of adolescent child-bearing in 1996 dollars at \$6.9 billion (Robin Hood Foundation, 1996).

### 3 BIG REASONS FOR BUSINESSES TO GET INVOLVED

#### Teen pregnancy leads to:

- **lost productivity and economic growth**
- **increased federal spending**
- **increased poverty**

- *Increased federal spending.* In fiscal year 1995, the federal government spent approximately \$39.3 billion to assist families that were begun when the mother was a teenager, and \$131 million on programs to prevent teen pregnancy (Flinn & Houser, 1998).
- *Increased poverty.* Teen parents and their children are less likely to complete high school and more likely to be poor. Teen mothers are also more likely to have low birthweight babies, who are at risk for lifelong developmental and health problems, all of which may prove to be

## CASE IN POINT

### Success by 6 in Polk, Highlands, and Hardee counties, Florida

In 1995, community representatives discussed starting a community-wide initiative to help Central Florida's children. The group reviewed several programs and chose **Success by 6**, a United Way program, as their vehicle. Success by 6 creates a community-wide partnership of private businesses, government, religious groups, labor, education, and health and human services organizations to focus on children's issues. Teen pregnancy is a frequent topic for the Florida program because these three counties have the highest teen pregnancy rates in the state, and everyone understood that by reducing teen pregnancy rates, child health and well-being would improve.

The Florida Success by 6 is guided by three prevention strategies: advocacy, collaboration, and access to services. The advocacy committee has developed a video and script featuring business leaders asking their peers to become involved and has produced a "What You Can Do Guide"

for businesses who want to become involved. The collaboration committee is working to help the communities' home visitors better coordinate their efforts and has developed a Home Visitor Clearinghouse. The access to services committee is using social marketing to expand parent education in the three counties to reach a wider audience.

A key leader of this initiative has been Carol Jenkins Barnett, Chair of **Publix Super Markets Charities, Inc.** Ms. Barnett was one of several volunteers who were sent by the local United Way to a United Way of America leadership training session. While there, she was sold on Success by 6 and, upon her return, became committed to using it to involve more business leaders in the local effort. She helped recruit executives for the board by issuing invitation letters to meetings and breakfasts. No one turned her down. The result was a 32-member board of CEO-level officials from the public and private sectors.

very costly (Southern Regional Project on Infant Mortality, 1997).

All of these factors affect the quality of the current and future workforce, an issue of great interest to businesses.

### **The business community has many potential roles**

Preventing teen pregnancy requires a broad-based campaign that addresses health, economic, policy, social, and other issues. While that may make the task seem overwhelming, it also means that businesses can play a wide variety of

roles and that businesses of all sizes and types can join in.

#### ***Convener***

An invitation from one CEO to another to participate in a meeting or initiative carries a lot of weight. Carol Jenkins Barnett, Chair of Publix Super Markets Charities, Inc., has played this role very successfully.

#### ***Leader***

The box below shows how a business leader like Jim Renier of Honeywell, who is willing to champion teen pregnancy issues, can create a big impact

## **Honeywell's New Vistas School**

The **New Vistas School** in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is another example of the United Way's Success by 6 program in action. New Vistas opened in 1990 for students in grades 10 through 12 who are mothers or who are expecting a child. It offers individualized and small group instruction, as well as health and social services and parenting classes; there is also a clear emphasis on preventing repeat teen pregnancies. The school also provides child care and early childhood education for the students' children. There have been 142 graduates since the program began, and many have gone on to employment or further education. Repeat pregnancies are significantly lower among New Vistas students than would be expected, given national statistics. Honeywell started the school and provides the space for it. Partners in this

venture include the Minneapolis Public School System, the Minneapolis Health Department, and other organizations.

The champion behind this innovative school is Jim Renier, former CEO of Honeywell. His interest in children comes from two sources: his personal experience—he is a father of eight—and his corporate perspective, from which he understands the importance of investing early in children's lives to ensure a strong, educated workforce. "It's one of the most self-serving things in the world for a corporation," Mr. Renier says. Citing the Minneapolis experience, he also emphasizes that no single entity can tackle teen pregnancy. It requires community collaboration between business, government agencies, schools, parents, and kids themselves.

on a community and recruit other executives and community leaders at the same time.

### ***Spokesperson***

Business leaders often hold prominent positions within the community and attract the spotlight when they speak out. This can draw much-needed attention to issues such as teen pregnancy prevention. Once a business leader understands the importance of preventing teen pregnancy, he or she may be willing to serve as a public spokesperson on the issue. This increases attention paid to teen pregnancy prevention and can generate

favorable publicity for the company. A business spokesperson can be useful at legislative hearings, press conferences, public service announcements, or other public forums.

### ***Program manager***

A business may be comfortable developing and administering a youth development or teen pregnancy prevention program. Gunstock Ski Resort is a good example of this role.

### ***Supporter***

Local programs can always benefit from financial or in-kind

## CASE IN POINT

### **Gunstock Ski Resort**

**Gunstock Ski Resort** sponsors many activities that benefit youth, including mentoring programs with area schools, work programs with correctional facilities, and reduced rate children's skiing programs. Gunstock provides school "Outreach" skiing programs to over 55 New Hampshire area schools, involving over 8,000 students aged 5 to 18. These programs offer children the opportunity to ski at affordable rates, while providing a safe and social learning environment.

Gunstock works with several schools, including Gilford Middle High School, on a "School to Work" program. Students in this program enter

an individual mentor program with a Gunstock staff member who works in an area of the student's interest. Gunstock also develops various community projects with the Genesis Counseling Group, an organization that helps individuals and families cope with problems.

Gunstock management notes "that through educating and guiding the underprivileged and troubled youths of today, contributing members of society are likely to be formed for tomorrow." Gunstock also recognizes that the children involved in these programs may be future employees in the area and that these programs will benefit the county and Gunstock.

contributions, and many businesses are able to contribute in this way. The **Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention, and Parenting** has enjoyed such support.

### Specific programs appropriate for businesses

While it is helpful to think of roles in broad terms, such as those above, it is important also to think of specific examples of what a business can do. The type of activities a business chooses to undertake will depend upon factors ranging from the size of the company to the chief executive's motivations. One business may find it best to sponsor a workplace program to assist employees in addressing teen pregnancy

prevention issues within their families. Another may become involved in community activities because they are concerned about the youth who are their future workforce. Still another may choose public policy activities to help shape better programs for at-risk children and families. All in all, no single activity is a cure-all for teen pregnancy. Each initiative is an important contribution.

Below are a sampling of the kinds of initiatives that businesses can spearhead. Some specifically address teen pregnancy prevention, while others focus more broadly on youth development. The latter may appeal to business leaders who understand the importance of investing in the future workforce,

## MOAPPP

The **Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention, and Parenting (MOAPPP)** has been successful in getting many types of businesses to support their efforts with in-kind and other donations. For example, a marketing firm has taken on MOAPPP as a pro bono client and developed a new logo for the organization. The firm also provided templates for the group's brochures and conference materials. Another business has donated used copy machines to MOAPPP.

At a recent MOAPPP fundraiser, which featured Minnesota Attorney General Hubert H. Humphrey III and actress Jane Fonda, restaurants donated food for the reception and The Aveda Corporation donated a ballroom for the dinner. "Personal contacts are key," explained Donna Fishman, Co-Director of MOAPPP. "We rely on contacts we have developed over the years, and on our board members' contacts, to create interest in our work and convince businesses to help out." In return, MOAPPP makes sure to publicly acknowledge businesses' contributions.

## PROGRAM OPTIONS FOR BUSINESS

- **mentoring**
- **summer jobs**
- **youth development**
- **adopt-a-school**
- **workplace initiatives**
- **coalition membership**
- **business partnerships**

but who may not want to limit their focus to teen pregnancy prevention.

### ***Mentoring programs for youth***

Businesses can participate in community mentoring programs by encouraging their employees to serve as volunteers in after-school tutoring programs, “Big Brother/Sister” programs, or similar efforts. For example, the Gunstock Ski Resort’s applied learning program helps students connect study subjects to actual work environments. Companies can hold a “Bring Youth to Work Day,” where they host students at the workplace and show them a typical day at the office. This exposes young people to an office setting, often for the first time in their lives.

**“Support of mentoring programs lends itself well to corporate objectives of better utilizing human resources by promoting employee involvement and volunteer efforts in the community.”**

*Committee for Economic Development, 1991*

### ***Summer jobs programs for youth***

Providing youth with work experience can go a long way toward inspiring them to stay in school and in preparing them to enter the workforce as adults. Businesses can develop summer jobs programs and/or internship programs for community youth. Many cities spearhead summer jobs programs.

### ***Youth development activities***

In many communities, advocacy organizations and family support agencies create innovative youth development programs with temporary funding, such as foundation grants. By becoming a long-term sponsor of such a program, a business gains visibility and recognition as a supportive community member. Most businesses will give to programs that operate in their neighborhood or community. Monetary or in-kind contributions are helpful.

### ***Adopt-a-school programs***

A business can make a commitment to a local school and provide donations, volunteers, and other support as needed. This can help ensure that schools can adequately serve students so they will be better prepared to enter the workforce as adults. It also can bring recognition to the business as an active community member.

### **Workplace initiatives**

Companies can carry out workplace programs that teach employees how to communicate with their children about sexual decision-making and teen pregnancy. Strategies range from disseminating information through bill stuffers, placemats, and bulletin boards to hosting brown-bag lunches with guest speakers. Business leaders can also encourage employees to volunteer at community youth development and/or teen pregnancy prevention programs by allowing them to use time during the work day. **Johnson & Johnson** not only allows its employees to use time during the workday to volunteer, but also makes cash grants to the

organizations in recognition of the volunteer. **Target Stores** also encourages volunteerism among its employees.

### **Membership in teen pregnancy prevention coalitions**

Many communities have active teen pregnancy prevention coalitions that would welcome the participation of the business community. Businesses may also want to partner with individual organizations that are working on teen pregnancy as **Johnson & Johnson** has done with the National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention (NOAPPP).

## CASE IN POINT

### **Target Stores**

Target Stores promotes family volunteering through the Points of Light Foundation's **Family Matters** volunteer initiative. The program, which Target has introduced nationwide, encourages Target team members to work with family members on volunteer projects. The headquarters office assists local efforts by providing direction, support, encouragement, funds, and opportunities for team members and their families to volunteer. Projects range from building school partnerships to delivering meals to the elderly.

A research report by The Conference Board found that this family volunteering program boosted employee morale, enhanced family life by providing "quality" time for family interaction, and improved Target's image in the community.

Through charitable contributions, Target contributes five percent of its pretax profits to the communities in which it does business. Target has received many awards for its community involvement, including the President's Service Award for its Family Matters program.

**“Coalitions are required because so many organizations are involved in various aspects of developing human resources. Business is particularly well-suited to deal with this complex array of needs and institutions because of both the substance and geographic reach of its activities.”**

*Committee for Economic Development, 1990*

### ***Business partnerships***

Businesses may wish to initiate their own coalitions or partnerships to focus on youth development or teen pregnancy prevention. Many local business groups, such as Kiwanis and the Rotary Club, offer ready-made

gatherings at which to raise these issues. National organizations, such as the Committee for Economic Development and The Business Roundtable, also can provide business leaders with resources and contacts.

## CASE IN POINT

### **Johnson & Johnson**

Johnson & Johnson and the National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention (NOAPPP) have joined together to form the **National Urban Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention**

**Program.** This three-year initiative is locating and evaluating urban pregnancy prevention programs that have operated for at least three years. To date, seven programs have been selected for in-depth evaluations by the program's Advisory Panel and Lead Evaluators. Each will also receive \$25,000 for their program.

Program staff are eager to have their programs evaluated and effectiveness documented. Potential funders will use results as guides for future program funding.

Johnson & Johnson joined in this effort because it understood the importance of having solid evaluation information about teen pregnancy prevention. It funds this effort through its Office of Corporate Contributions and participates on the Program's Advisory Committee.

## Program strategies for involving business in teen pregnancy prevention

Results from numerous initiatives and collaborations that have involved business suggest a number of strategies to follow in creating and sustaining meaningful business involvement in teen pregnancy prevention efforts.

### Generate a list of business prospects

Once a program, group, or coalition has developed clear ideas for activities that are appropriate for business to take on, the next step is to decide what kinds of businesses to target. Programs should think about which businesses, companies, and associations in the community would be receptive. One company might be interested in these issues because it is community-based and therefore interested in the welfare of the community itself. Another may be in the health care field and have an interest in women's health issues. Still another may be run by a business leader who has been affected by teen pregnancy or youth issues in his or her life and wants to take action on a more public level. Other businesses, such as advertising or media companies, may simply be logical partners in a community-based initiative.

One good place for a program to start researching potential prospects is a business's own publications. An annual report on company contributions or a community affairs publication will reveal a lot about a company's past involvement and potential interest in a teen pregnancy prevention effort.

Another approach is to contact business groups and membership organizations, such as the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, and national social-issue organizations, such as The Business Roundtable and the Washington Business Group on Health. (See the resources section of this chapter for contact information for these and similar organizations.) These groups can provide information on the kinds of activities the members are involved in and may even be able to help identify businesses that would be particularly interested in teen pregnancy prevention.

Sometimes businesses are already involved in related activities or are already connected with other community-based or nonprofit organizations.

New Jersey's **New Brunswick Tomorrow** is a community-based revitalization initiative that includes business leaders on various committees. Coalitions such as these may be promising partners for related youth development activities.

### Approach the business community

In many ways, approaching a company or organization is the most difficult part of involving business. Even those who have been successful in getting businesses to participate in youth development and/or teen pregnancy prevention activities find this to be the most challenging part of the task. This is because:

- Businesses receive frequent requests to participate in philanthropic activities and may resist additional commitments.

- Businesses may not understand how teen pregnancy affects their bottom line.
- Businesses may be hesitant to become involved in what they see as a controversial issue.
- Businesses may not see a clear role for themselves.

Programs need to tailor their approach in such a way that it takes into account these potential roadblocks to getting businesses on board. Success is more likely if programs approach business in a business-like style, with the following points in mind.

#### ***Talk the talk***

For business, the bottom line is the bottom line. Business leaders want reassurance that their investments will result in a payback down the road. The challenge is to make a pitch in the context of results. This can be done by stressing the enormous impact that teen pregnancy has on businesses and citing statistics such as those included in the introduction to this chapter.

#### ***Make it a “win/win proposition”***

Help businesses understand that taking on teen pregnancy prevention issues will benefit them as well as the community. Emphasize that employees view in-house parent education

### KEYS TO SUCCESS

#### **Recognize the diversity of the business community**

Big companies have a lot of clout, but “mom and pop” businesses with ties to a community also may be very interested in getting involved.

#### **Think broadly when considering how to contact businesses**

Programs can reach a diverse group of business leaders through ethnic business organizations and neighborhood business associations.

programs as a benefit, and that such programs help to create a family-friendly workplace. For example:

- The company could offer a seminar on how to talk to children about sex, love, and relationships in developmentally appropriate ways that build on the values parents hold. Not only would such a program be appreciated by the employees, but it may contribute to fewer teen pregnancies and, consequently, a stronger future labor force.
- A summer jobs program for youth could benefit the company in the long and short run by providing inexpensive employees and contributing to the development of an experienced future workforce.

### ***Address the cultural differences***

Even when they share common concerns about an issue, advocacy organizations and businesses are different kinds of operations with different cultures. Businesses are very focused on management and outcomes—they care about results over process, setting and sticking to timelines, and the appearance of written products, for example. It is important that programs accommodate these priorities. A program's planning

**“Business people know that it is less expensive to prevent failure than to try and correct it later—each year taxpayers spend \$16.6 billion to support the children of teen parents.”**

*Committee on Economic Development, 1991*

may need to be more detailed than usual, and its written materials should be of the same quality as the business's own.

### **Make an effective case**

Before a program goes knocking on a business's door, it needs to think carefully about who should do the knocking and on which door. The program may be inclined to make the initial contact because it knows the issues well, has ideas for how businesses can get involved, and has done all the legwork up to that point. But it may be more effective to have a business leader who already works with the program make the contact.

Here are a few more tips to maximize the chances of getting a positive response.

### ***Go straight to the top***

A CEO has the ultimate decision-making power about whether or not the business should take on community activities. Such a high-profile person will attract more attention to an issue than will a less senior employee. However, reduced access comes with that higher rank. Be prepared for the request to move down through the business

hierarchy. With CEO endorsement, a staff member may be assigned to work on the project. Public affairs or community liaison offices are often the contact points for community efforts such as teen pregnancy prevention. These staff are often dedicated to community activities and typically have the CEO's ear.

### ***Use peer pressure***

Many advocates have found that asking one business leader to ask another is effective in getting businesses to participate in activities. Programs can find their way to an executive through his or her existing contacts. This works because executives speak the same language and can discuss concerns and questions comfortably and candidly. Possible strategies for getting one business leader to involve others include:

- signing an invitation letter to a meeting;
- hosting a breakfast for interested community members; or
- asking other CEOs to join him or her on an advisory board.

A member of the **Minnesota Organization on Adolescent**

**Pregnancy, Prevention, and Parenting's (MOAPPP)** board convinced her husband to donate free advertising space in his business magazine to MOAPPP so the organization could advertise for interns at the state university.

### ***Respond to objections***

Even if a program's initial presentation to the CEO or his or her designee is perfect, programs may still encounter resistance. Below are examples of the kinds of concerns that executives may express when asked to become involved in teen pregnancy prevention. They are followed by points that programs can use to respond.

*Teen pregnancy does not affect my business.* Teen pregnancy affects everyone, including businesses. Teen parents are more likely to drop out of school, live in poverty, be unemployed, and have children who suffer the same fate. This means a less competitive and productive workforce. It also means a heavy hit to the pocketbook.

*We do not have time to get involved.* There are lots of ways to get involved, and any amount of participation would be welcomed and valuable. The business can spend as much or as little time as it chooses:

FOR MORE SUPPORT IN RESPONDING TO OBJECTIONS

See the introduction to this chapter and the info sheet at the end of the chapter.

- If time is limited, the business could simply agree to make a donation or sponsor an ongoing teen pregnancy prevention initiative.
- A slightly more intensive time commitment might include such activities as having the CEO or another company official speak at a conference or at public hearings on an issue related to teen pregnancy.
- A substantial time commitment might involve such activities as convening a business coalition to focus on these issues.

*Aren't community organizations already taking care of teen pregnancy?* Community organizations play a critical role in mobilizing support for teen pregnancy prevention and in developing innovative programs. Teen pregnancy is complex, involving social, economic, and health issues. No one entity or approach can singlehandedly tackle it. If all sectors of a community participate—advocacy organizations, businesses, government, social service agencies, the media, and others—we can make a difference.

*There's nothing I can do about teen pregnancy.* Businesses can take on many roles in teen preg-

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

### Be creative in overcoming initial reluctance:

- **develop a list of potential activities**
- **provide technical assistance**
- **offer to help with tasks**

nancy prevention, as noted at the outset of this chapter.

*This issue is too controversial.* There's little disagreement that teen pregnancy and childbearing are not good ideas, and there are many non-controversial ways to help kids that are perfect for business to be involved in, such as youth development and jobs programs.

### ***Think ahead about what to leave behind***

Once the initial meeting is over, it is important for a potential business partner to have appropriate, user-friendly materials to review later. Chances are that the executive will want to discuss a program's proposition with others in his or her office before making a commitment. Programs need to make sure business leaders are left with written information that can be shared with those in the company who would do the day-to-day work. Such materials could include:

- the handout at the end of this chapter, which explains why and how business leaders should get involved;

- fact sheets on teen pregnancy in the community;
- a video that the program or another organization has developed; and
- materials from the program's existing activities.

### **Sustain the relationship**

Getting businesses involved in teen pregnancy prevention issues does not happen overnight. It requires careful planning, material development, networking, and other hard work to cultivate and sustain the relationship.

#### ***Follow up***

Follow up involves phone calls to set up appointments with the right people in each company, thank-you letters for meetings or referrals, responses to requests for more information that are made during meetings, and more phone calls after meetings to keep the issue alive and moving through the company's decision-making machinery. If the program was the one who made the initial contact with the executive, it can also ask other business community partners to make a follow-up phone call encouraging him or her to join the effort.

#### ***Stay connected and be a resource***

Keep in mind that, as beneficial as it may be, involving busi-

nesses in your efforts will also mean more work for a program. Programs will need to provide businesses with suggestions for roles they can play and specific activities they can undertake, and they must be prepared to provide technical assistance and guidance throughout their involvement. That assistance may include:

- helping develop information materials for workplace programs;
- drafting talking points for a CEO who has agreed to speak at a public forum; or
- planning meetings that a business has agreed to host.

#### ***Shine the spotlight***

Businesses want recognition for their philanthropic activities. Before seeking the involvement of a business, programs should think about how to publicize their efforts. Possibilities include:

- announcing a newly-formed partnership;
- providing a CEO with the opportunity to speak at an upcoming conference or meeting on teen pregnancy prevention;
- arranging an awards dinner for businesses who have

made important contributions to the community; or

- arranging for a CEO to speak out publicly on an issue related to teen pregnancy.

## Conclusion

Involving businesses in teen pregnancy prevention is not an easy task. It requires persistence, creativity, flexibility, and—above all—hard work. Just as a program will need to convince business leaders that their investment of time and effort will pay off in the long run, programs must believe that their time and effort to involve

business leaders will, too. Through workplace initiatives, community-focused activities, or other public forums, businesses can contribute to teen pregnancy prevention efforts in unique ways. The challenge is to convince them of the importance of their participation and then make it easy and exciting for them to do so.

## References

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Washington Business Group on Health. (1996). *Business, babies and the bottom line: Corporate innovations and best practices in maternal and child health*. Washington, DC: Author.

## Programs mentioned in this chapter

### **Gunstock Ski Resort**

Gunstock  
P.O. Box 1307  
Laconia, NH 03247  
(800) 486-7862

### **Honeywell, Inc.—New Vistas Schools**

Chris Bremer, Manager  
Education Programs  
Honeywell, Inc.  
MN12-5278  
P.O. Box 524  
Minneapolis, MN 55440-0524  
(612) 951-2066

### **Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention, and Parenting (MOAPP)**

P.O. Box 40392  
St. Paul, MN 55104  
(651) 644-1447  
Toll Free in MN (800) 657-3697  
Fax: (651) 644-1417  
[www.cyfc.umn.edu/moapp/](http://www.cyfc.umn.edu/moapp/)

### **National Urban Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program**

Michael Bzdak, Director  
Corporate Contributions  
1 Johnson & Johnson Plaza  
New Brunswick, NJ 08933  
(732) 524-3698

### **Success by 6—Florida**

Brittany Lowman  
Director  
Success by 6, United Way of Central Florida  
P.O. Box 1357  
Highland City, FL 33846-1357  
(941) 648-1500

### **Target Stores**

Annette Watz  
Community Involvement Coordinator  
33 South Sixth St.  
P.O. Box 1392  
Minneapolis, MN 55440-1392  
(612) 304-8543

## Other useful resources

The following organizations may be helpful in identifying businesses that are concerned about youth development and teen pregnancy issues. Others have information materials that may be useful in teen pregnancy prevention work.

### **America's Promise**

909 N. Washington St.  
Suite 400  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(703) 684-4500  
Fax: (703) 684-7328  
[www.americaspromise.org](http://www.americaspromise.org)

America's Promise—the Alliance for Youth is the multi-year, national campaign to further the mission and goals of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, held in April 1997. The organization works to help America's youth reach their full potential by building an alliance of corporations, foundations, organizations, communities, public agencies, and individuals. America's Promise offers written materials, how-to guides, videotapes, advertising/paid media materials, and event materials to interested communities.

### **The Business Roundtable**

1615 L St., NW  
Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 872-1260  
Fax: (202) 466-3509  
[www.brtable.org](http://www.brtable.org)

The Business Roundtable (BRT) is an association of chief executive officers who examine public issues that affect the economy and develop positions that seek to reflect sound economic and social principles. It believes that the basic

interests of business closely parallel the interests of the American people. The member CEOs work in task forces on specific issues, direct research, supervise preparation of position papers, recommend policy, and speak out on issues.

### **Businesses for Social Responsibility**

609 Mission St.  
Second Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 537-0888  
Fax: (415) 537-0889  
[www.bsr.org](http://www.bsr.org)

Businesses for Social Responsibility (BSR) is a membership organization for companies of all sizes and sectors. Its mission is to help its member companies achieve long-term commercial success by carrying out policies and practices that honor high ethical standards and meet their responsibilities to all who are affected by their decisions. Its initiatives include the **Business & Community Program**, which seeks to facilitate greater and more effective involvement of the business sector in the community. Its goal is to work with companies and other groups to promote the innovative and effective use of corporate assets that results in economic benefits to disadvantaged communities.

### **Children's Defense Fund Child Watch Visitation Program**

25 E St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 628-8787  
Fax: (202) 662-3510  
[www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working on issues that affect children, particularly those who are poor and disadvan-

taged. The **Child Watch Visitation Program** was designed by CDF to allow leaders to see first-hand what is happening to the nation's children by adding faces to the statistics and reports.

Organized by volunteers and advocates in local coalitions around the country, the Child Watch Program uses onsite visits to programs serving children and families; briefings by public policy experts; written background materials; and experiential activities to educate and move executives and other community leaders to action on behalf of children and families.

### **Committee for Economic Development**

477 Madison Ave.  
New York, NY 10022  
(212) 688-2063  
Fax: (212) 758-9068  
[www.ced.org](http://www.ced.org)

The Committee for Economic Development (CED) is an independent, nonprofit, trustee-directed business organization. Through a business-academic partnership, CED seeks to develop policy statements and other research materials that serve as guides to public and business policy and that influence the formation of business and public policy. In recent years, CED's work on school reform has been credited with increasing business involvement in education. CED's trustees promote CED's positions through activities such as congressional testimony, local initiatives, and speaking at conferences.

### **March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation**

National Office  
1275 Mamaroneck Ave.  
White Plains, NY 10605  
(914) 428-7100  
Fax: (914) 428-8203  
[www.modimes.org](http://www.modimes.org)

The March of Dimes (MOD) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the health of babies by reducing birth defects and infant mortality. It is one of the 10 largest voluntary health agencies in the country, with 101 chapters nationwide. Among its numerous activities, MOD has

focused on helping employers reduce their maternity-related health care costs and improve birth outcomes. Its programs, "Babies and You," and "Healthy Babies, Healthy Business," are widely used.

### **United Way of America**

701 N. Fairfax St.  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(703) 836-7100  
Fax: (703) 683-7840  
[www.unitedway.org](http://www.unitedway.org)

United Way of America is the national service and training center for local United Ways nationwide. Its many programs include the **National Corporate Leadership Program (NCL)** and **Success by 6**. NCL seeks to increase funds and volunteers from the corporate community by heightening needs awareness and increasing partnerships with United Ways, companies, and employees. Success by 6 is a community-wide children's initiative that brings together resources from a partnership of private business, government, religious groups, educators, health and human service organizations, and neighbors and parents.

**Washington Business Group on Health**

777 North Capitol St., NE  
Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 408-9320  
Fax: (202) 408-9332  
[www.wbgh.com](http://www.wbgh.com)

Washington Business Group on Health (WBGH) is a national nonprofit organization exclusively devoted to the analysis of health policy and related worksite issues from the perspective of large employers. Business group members are generally Fortune 500 and large public sector employers. Its initiatives include WBGH's **National Business Partnership to Improve Family Health**, which has worked to stimulate creative programs and spotlight corporate innovations in maternal and child health. WBGH provides a forum for the exchange of information on best practices that increase corporate competitiveness and productivity.

## Businesses' role in teen pregnancy prevention: Why and how

### *Why should businesses become involved in teen pregnancy prevention?*

- A Robin Hood Foundation study estimated the costs to taxpayers of adolescent childbearing in 1996 dollars at \$6.9 billion. This represents the “amount by which the social welfare of the nation would have increased” if society had implemented a policy (13 years ago) that successfully delayed childbearing until adolescents reached the age of 20 or 21 (Robin Hood Foundation, 1996).
- In fiscal year 1995, the U.S. government spent approximately \$39.3 billion to assist families that were begun when the mother was a teenager, and \$131 million on programs to prevent teen pregnancy (Flinn & Hanser, 1998).
- Teen parents and their children are less likely to complete high school and more likely to be poor. Teen mothers are also more likely to have low birthweight babies, who are at risk for life-long developmental and health problems (Southern Regional Project on Infant Mortality, 1997).

These factors affect the quality of the current and future workforce, an issue of great interest to business.

### *How can business become involved?*

Businesses can make a real difference in teen pregnancy prevention efforts. They tend to be well-positioned in the community to take leadership roles and can provide a variety of resources. The list below offers a sampling of the kinds of initiatives that businesses can spearhead. Some specifically address teen pregnancy prevention, while others focus more broadly on youth development.

#### **Mentoring programs for youth**

The Committee for Economic Development states that “support of mentoring programs lends itself well to corporate objectives of better utilizing human resources by promoting employee involvement and volunteer efforts in the community” (CED, 1991). Businesses can participate in community mentoring programs by serving as volunteers in after-school tutoring programs, “Big Brother/Sister” programs, or similar activities. Companies can also hold a “Bring Youth

to Work Day” where they host students at the workplace and show them a typical day at the office. This exposes young people to an office setting, often for the first time in their lives.

### **Summer jobs programs for youth**

Providing youth with work experience can go a long way toward inspiring them to stay in school and preparing them to enter the workforce as adults. Businesses can develop summer jobs programs and/or internship programs for community youth.

### **Support of youth development programs/activities**

In many communities, advocacy organizations and/or family support agencies have spearheaded innovative youth development programs that rely on temporary funding, such as foundation grants. By becoming sponsors, businesses can help ensure these programs continue while gaining recognition as supportive community members. Most will give to programs that operate in their neighborhood or community. Monetary donations or in-kind contributions also are helpful.

### **Adopt-a-school programs**

A business can make a commitment to a local school and provide donations, volunteers, and other support as needed. This can help ensure that schools can adequately serve students so they will be better prepared to enter the workforce as adults. It also can bring recognition to the business as a proactive community member.

### **Workplace initiatives**

Companies can carry out workplace programs that teach employees how to communicate with their children about sexual decision-making and teen pregnancy. Strategies range from disseminating information through bill stuffers, placemats, and bulletin boards to sponsoring brown bag lunches with guest speakers. Business leaders can also encourage employees to volunteer at community youth development and/or teen pregnancy prevention programs by allowing them to use time during the work day.

### **Membership in teen pregnancy prevention coalitions**

Many communities have active teen pregnancy prevention coalitions that would welcome the participation of businesses. According to the Committee for Economic Development, “Coalitions are required because so many organizations are involved in various aspects of

developing human resources. Business is particularly well suited to deal with this complex array of needs and institutions because of both the substance and geographic reach of its activities” (CED, 1990).

### **Convener of a business partnership**

Businesses may wish to initiate their own coalition or partnership to focus on youth development or teen pregnancy prevention issues. Many local business groups, such as Kiwanis and the Rotary Club, offer ready-made gatherings at which to raise these issues. National organizations, such as the Council for Economic Development and The Business Roundtable, also can provide business leaders with resources and contacts.

### **Spokesperson for legislative hearings, press conferences, public service announcements, or other public forums**

Once a business leader understands the importance of preventing teen pregnancy, he or she may be willing to serve as a public spokesperson on the issue. This benefits the issue by increasing attention to it and can generate favorable publicity for the company.

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